

promised so much, proved disappointing later; coffee cultivation needed cheap labor, and labor went steadily up, while the price went down.

Heavily mortgaged for expenses that proved greater than anticipated, working without stint, and under all sorts of discouragements, the coffee planter sold out, when he could do so, to the sugar plantation.

COFFEE UNPROFITABLE AT PRESENT.

The writer having sought for information at first hand from those connected with the coffee business in Hawaii, knows of no one who would recommend that business to any one but his enemy, except in a few favored localities, unless there is a radical rise in price; as to other products no more favorable story can at present be told.

Transportation is difficult and expensive. The market in Hawaii is limited and very easily over-stocked. We cannot compete with California in citrus or other fruits, and apparently in none of the staple articles that to large amounts are steadily imported. The writer knows personally men of intelligence and energy who have worked indefatigably to demonstrate the possibilities of small farming in Hawaii. Their experience is not a consoling one.

Since the first lines of this article were written, the question was put to an intelligent American farmer who took up public lands not far removed from Honolulu, the center of trade and consumption, and who had the advantage of experience and capital—can the Homesteader prosper in Hawaii? His answer was unhesitating that he could not, unless favored by some special and peculiar conditions that could not generally apply, and this statement is directly in line with the writer's observations.

What then, under these conditions, has been the result from the Land Act of 1895?

Thousands of acres to which the title had been perfected, were sold for the cultivation of sugar, the one vital industry of the country. A considerable amount of the land taken up still remains in the possession of the original applicants, but no new field of industry has been opened up, and it is doubtful whether the occupiers (except perhaps the Portuguese and for the reasons previously stated) are enabled to make their whole living on and from the occupied land. By means of employment in the vicinity, they may be able to hold their lands and make their homes upon them, but this is not the fundamental idea of a Homestead proposition.

A MEASURE OF SUCCESS.

Here it is worth while to note that the efforts at Homestead settlement have only had a measure of success where they have been made in close proximity to the sugar plantations or towns. Isolated tracts have proved unconditional failures.

This is not a very cheerful picture of results—considering the honest effort made for so long a period, to establish small landed proprietors, and yet many good results have come.

Lands that had lain for generations wholly unproductive were opened up, roads were built and homes established, and in spite of the discouraging number of those who sold out their holdings as soon as they could do so, the number of small land holders was increased, and even the holdings that were sold became in other hands part of the productive area of the country.

The results of the 1895 Land Act were not all that had been hoped for, but nevertheless were good.

LEASES OF PUBLIC LANDS ADVOCATED.

This article would be incomplete without a reference to the leases permitted under Hawaiian land laws and in regard to which much misrepresentation is made.

The old method of leasing great tracts for long periods and for inconsiderable rents without auction sale, conspicuous in the old leases of Crown lands has nothing to be said in its favor, except perhaps by some favored lessee. But such leases are of years ago. The Land Act of 1895 permitted a lease for term of 21 years by auction sale, which term for any agricultural land is now limited to five years. Of such leases intelligently made, the writer is an unqualified advocate and for the following reasons:

1st. Because there is a considerable area of land that may be so leased, that is a practical desert, except as it is irrigated by pumping at an immense expense, and which it is only worth while to irrigate in connection with other lands owned by private parties. For such lands high rentals can be obtained,

and through the public treasury the whole country is the gainer.

In other cases public lands frequently lie "sandwiched" between private lands in such manner that they are of but little use to anyone except the adjoining owner (usually the plantation) and for which he will also pay a good rent. To give these lands away under the pretense of "Homesteading" would mean the loss of tens of thousands of dollars annually to the public, and the homestead result would be nothing of any consequence. The dry land homesteader would remain dry, unless the proprietors of pumping works would supply him with water and they—well they are neither more nor less philanthropic than other business men. The homesteader on the tract "sandwiched" or surrounded by private lands would have his difficulties not the least of which would be the question of a road.

By various methods these homesteaders could be induced, or would come to see that their land was more valuable to sell than to hold on to and the old process of consolidation would go on. In some cases a large tract has value—subdivided has next to none. A case is in mind of about 20,000 acres as for-bidding a looking lava desert as one could wish to see, or avoid seeing. In its entirety it forms a good cattle ranch with a little drinking water here and there. Subdivided no man would be so miserable as to take 160 acres of it.

RICE LANDS.

There is a limited amount of low ly-

lowed through as best one may. Where mud is not an obstacle, too often rough lava fields present road difficulties nearly as great. The writer has in mind a tract of about 2,000 acres which as Commission of Public Lands he desired to open for Homestead purposes. He was at once confronted with the road difficulty. About 6 miles of grade road would be necessary to reach the tract: it would cost, if reasonably well constructed at least fifteen or twenty thousand dollars.

Without the road it would be useless to open the land; with it there was no certainty, either that the land would



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FUTURE HOMESTEAD PROSPECTS.

What is the future prospect as to Homesteads in Hawaii?

There remain in round numbers about 1,720,000 acres of public land, and it would seem a natural inference, that some considerable portion would furnish a field for new efforts in the homestead line, but such inference the writer can not draw. At least 500,000 acres of this area comes into the classes of positively barren lands that cannot be redeemed, and rugged inaccessible mountain tracts that are apparently hopeless for any homestead purposes. Over 1,000,000 acres is classed as grazing and high forest land, and though no one would be so rash as to say there were no agricultural possibilities for at least a portion of this area, the fact remains that such possibilities have never been demonstrated (that is any profitable use of the same for agriculture).

There still remains in addition to the above about 200,000 acres to be considered. About 25,000 acres of this last is classed as cane and rice land, and is very largely under lease for those industries.

The remainder is in general not so good as the lands already disposed of, being more broken and difficult of access.

Unless some new and productive industry is developed in the country, it is difficult to see why future results should differ greatly from those of the past. The writer at least does not expect to see much difference. A slow progress is possible and probable, as favorable portions can be opened up and the sine qua non of roads furnished.

To attempt more than this will probably have little result other than to waste what land remains, and disappoint many who might be tempted by apparently easy terms to attempt the impossible.

AMERICAN LAND LAWS.

The writer is aware that a bill to extend the land laws of the United States to these Islands, has recently been introduced in Congress by the delegate for Hawaii. It is not possible in this article to discuss how the cry arose among certain people in Hawaii for American land laws. It is sufficient to say that it has been largely used for political purposes, and as a handy club with which to beat the Territorial Government.

The difficulty has not been with the land laws of Hawaii, but in the hard commercial facts of the case. The sun will shine no brighter nor the jungle be easier to clear, nor the insect pests less numerous, or the land more productive, because new land laws are applied in Hawaii. The rectangular system of lots suited to a large part of the United States is not suited to a country where



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ing, wet land suited to rice culture among the Public lands, in all not over 1,000 acres, but of much value. No one but the humble Chinaman showing any disposition to wallow knee deep in water and mud to reclaim these swamps and continue the cultivation of them—but he will pay to the public Treasury anywhere from fifteen to fifty dollars per acre annual rent for them. These lands would no more be homesteaded than the craters of the moon. They can be wasted, but the only intelligent way to deal with them, as with the other lands named above, is to lease them, and with their revenue help to build the roads and bridges that are necessary in a hundred localities.

ROADLESS LANDS.

Here a word must be said on the subject of roads, a vitally important matter in any Homestead proposition in Hawaii.

At low elevation there remains so little Public land of any good quality (there are plenty of lava wastes) that it scarcely cuts any figure in the question. Most of the public lands are at an elevation of 2,000 feet and upward to extreme limit of 14,000 feet. The lands lie on mountain sides cut by innumerable ravines and valleys, generally with dense jungle, and several thousand feet above the main established roads of the Islands.

They are in wet rainy belts where any road other than a macadamized road soon becomes a terror to be wal-

be taken up or be successfully used if so taken. This particular question was settled by the fact that there was no money with which to build the road, but the question presented is the one that always has confronted and will confront those charged with the task of carrying out the Homestead laws in Hawaii.



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